IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON POPE JOHN PAUL II

SEPTEMBER 23, 1982

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

13-417 O WASHINGTON : 1983

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

J891-1

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida, *Chairman*
ROBERT DOLE, Kansas, *Cochairman*

ORRIN G. HATCH, Utah
JOHN HEINZ, Pennsylvania
ALFONSE M. D'AMATO, New York
CLAIBORNE PELL, Rhode Island
PATRICK J. LEAHY, Vermont
SIDNEY R. YATES, Illinois
JONATHAN B. BINGHAM, New York
TIMOTHY E. WIRTH, Colorado
MILLICENT FENWICK, New Jersey
DON RITTER, Pennsylvania

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Hon. ELLIOTT ABRAMS, Department of State
Hon. RICHARD NORMAN PERLE, Department of Defense
Hon. WILLIAM H. MORRIS, Jr., Department of Commerce

R. SPENCER OLIVER, *Staff Director*
CATHERINE COSMAN, *Coordinator*
CHRISTOPHER BRESCIA, *Coordinator*
BARBARA BLACKBURN, *Administrative Assistant*

CONTENTS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

The Assassination Attempt on Pope John Paul II

SEPTEMBER 23, 1982

WITNESSES

	Page
Sterling, Claire, journalist and author of "The Terror Network"	4
Ledeen, Michael A., senior fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University	21
Slavov, Atanas, Bulgarian emigre	25

WRITTEN STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Statement by Michael A. Ledeen	20
Statement by Claire Sterling	18
Statement by Commission Chairman Dante B. Fascell	28
Statement by Commission Cochairman Bob Dole	28
Statement by Commissioner Orrin G. Hatch	29

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON POPE JOHN PAUL II

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1982

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, D.C.

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, in room 2171, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., at 9:30 a.m., Representative Millicent Fenwick, Commissioner, presiding.

In attendance: Commissioners Bingham, Ritter, Leahy, and D'Amato.

Also in attendance: R. Spencer Oliver, staff director and general counsel.

OPENING STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER FENWICK

Mrs. FENWICK. I would like to welcome everyone here today to a public hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The subject of our hearing, which recently has received considerable publicity, is the possible complicity of the Bulgarian or Soviet secret police in Mehmet Ali Agca's attempt to kill Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981. Our three distinguished witnesses will provide insights into several important problems. It is clear that Principle VI of the Helsinki Final Act commits the signatory nations, of which, of course, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union are two, to refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorist activities.

Our witnesses today will perhaps shed some light on whether or not the Soviet Union and Bulgaria are keeping that promise. Claire Sterling, noted journalist, will provide further information on the life and times of terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca, including his involvement with the Turkish arms ring supported by the Bulgarians. Michael Ledeen, former special advisor to Secretary Haig, will discuss how support for terrorism against the West will fit into general Soviet strategic designs. Atanas Slavov, recent emigre from Bulgaria, will describe the Bulgarian Secret Police activities in Europe and in the United States.

Our hearing is part of an essential effort carefully and impartially to examine all the evidence, no matter how circumstantial, of possible Soviet and Bulgarian involvement with Agca. It is hardly surprising that professional secret services such as the KGB and the Bulgarian Secret Police cover their tracks extremely carefully on any involvement with international terrorism. It is also not surprising that it is very difficult to find anyone in the West with expert knowledge about Warsaw Pact support for international ter-

rorism since compartmentalization of knowledge is an essential component of all intelligence work. Therefore, there are probably only a very few people highly placed in the Kremlin who have a clear understanding of this issue.

In closing, let me say I think we need to examine the possiblity of Soviet complicity in terrorist operations which would be in blatant violation of Helsinki pledges. Everyone here knows that the Soviets revere Lenin as a demagog, and this is what Lenin said about terrorism: "In principle, we have never rejected terrorism, nor can we reject it." I don't know of any serious, responsible and respected nation that would allow such a thing to remain in their code.

To consolidate their rule, the Soviets have supplied terror tactics on a massive scale inside the Soviet Union, killing untold millions of people. Why should we overlook the possibility that the Soviets may exploit ethnic and economic frustrations in the West as well as in the Third World and provide the wherewithal for terrorists to destabilize other governments? That is one of the important issues we shall explore today.

I am sure that you may have a statement, Senator D'Amato?

Mr. D'AMATO. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I think the Commission meets today to consider the compelling evidence which points to complicity on the part of the Bulgarian and Soviet security and intelligence forces in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II.

Such a conspiracy on the part of the two signatories to the Helsinki Accord stands in clear violation of the agreement which states that participating nations will "refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorist activities." Recent reports, including the NBC White Paper, "The Man Who Shot the Pope—A Study in Terrorism," as well as Claire Sterling's article in this month's edition of Reader's Digest entitled "The Plot to Murder the Pope," have raised serious questions concerning the role the Bulgarian Secret Police and Soviet KGB played in this heinous act of international terrorism. Through the investigative research of Claire Sterling, a well-known and well-respected journalist in the field of international terrorism, and others, the link between these forces and Ali Agca, the man who attempted to murder the first Polish pontiff of the Catholic Church, is brought into focus.

Despite early speculation that Agca, a self-proclaimed terrorist, acted alone in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981, subsequent investigation has borne out the connection between the intelligence services and Agca. I'm convinced that the Soviet KGB had full knowledge, and at least tactically supported the plot to kill the Pope.

John Paul II has spoken out on numerous occasions with respect to the human rights situation in Poland, actions which have clearly annoyed officials in the Kremlin, deeply disturbed them. As a matter of fact, intimidated them. As the NBC White Paper recently reported, Pope John Paul sent a secret note to President Brezhnev warning the Soviet leader that he would abdicate his office and return to his native Poland if Soviet troops invaded his homeland.

I know of this. I know the monsignor who carried the note. I spoke to him personally, was convinced that the Russians were

behind this move. He indicated this to me. I indicated this on October 13, or October 19, 1981, to several of the CIA people, debriefing them and indicating to them what I had learned on my trip to Rome.

This communication has led me to believe certainly that there was a very apparent effort on the part of the Soviets to get rid of the Vatican and his influence. We are all too familiar with the collaboration of the Soviets and the Polish military government and what they have done to suppress the Solidarity Union and deny even the most basic of human rights to the people of Poland.

While we have been given some insight into the events which led up to the assassination attempt, many questions about the international terrorist network which sought to eliminate the Pope remain. I am hopeful that today's hearings will shed some additional light on this matter.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Senator. Senator Leahy, would you like to say a few words?

Mr. LEAHY. Only to this extent, Madam Chairman. I was briefed on this matter at some length as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. I feel that the would be assassin in this case was not a mere half-crazed, religious fanatic or fascist out to kill the Pope for some bizarre reason comprehensible only to his own demented mind, he was a cold killer, with extensive connections with the underworld of European and Middle Eastern terrorism, including, quite possibly, Eastern European intelligence services.

I am quite interested in hearing what there may be on the public record and see how that relates to what we have heard in the classified briefings on this matter. I also suspect that the public and the press here are far more interested in hearing the witnesses than speeches from Members of Congress, so I will have nothing further to say except that I am quite anxious to hear Ms. Sterling. Thank you.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Senator. Congressman Ritter.

Mr. RITTER. Thank you, Mrs. Fenwick. Today we go forth to think the unthinkable, consider the unimaginable, and to investigate what someday may be called "the crime of the century." Not because of the amount of blood spilled, for every day we witness far greater flows; not because of the end result, because the Pope is alive and working today. No. The events culminating on May 13, 1981, may well qualify as the crime of the century because of what they symbolize.

Just what do they symbolize? They symbolize a national criminal mentality which exceeds the realm of the credible. Some will simply refuse to believe what happened, no matter what is known. And others will go to great lengths to turn their backs or their ears in order to avoid certain conclusions. But for those who find credibility, they will be sickened by a criminal mentality which places a knife at the heart of the most important values of human civilization.

We are here today with open minds to listen to those who have knowledge and experience in the subject matter, ask questions and get answers. The subject matter is bizarre. So bizarre as to tax the imagination of reasonable people. But it is also one which we must

confront. Sticking our heads in the sand we may remove the sights and the sounds, but we will not soften the blows.

It is possible that the directions pointed by today's hearing will not only be sickening, but dangerous as well. Still, as free people, there is far greater danger in sweeping this matter under the rug. Already there is great fear, particularly in Europe, of openly discussing this subject. As terrorism gains in momentum as an arm of national policy, particularly for the U.S.S.R., its satellites and its friends, we must ask the question: Who might be the next victim? It could be you, it could be me, it just might be us.

Many Americans are concerned about reducing the dangers of the arms race, and some have even backed proposals in curtailing our own arms development first as a goodwill gesture towards the Soviets, and then waiting to see if the Soviets do the same. Such a time, these Helsinki Commission hearings should be both interesting and instructive.

I have been working for some time with my colleagues on the Helsinki Commission and with Chairman Fascell to hold hearings on this matter after I became convinced that the publicized motives behind the attempted assassination of the Pope simply didn't hold up under close scrutiny, that something more was involved.

I called for these hearings, and I am pleased that this hearing is taking place today, particularly now that additional information has come to light such as Claire Sterling's article in the September issue of Reader's Digest, and Marvin Kalb's recent NBC White Paper this past Tuesday, both of which point to the Soviet Union as the motive force behind the assassination attempt.

I thank our witnesses for gathering here today. I look forward to what they will be saying.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Congressman. And now we come to our first witness, Claire Sterling, as we have said, based in Rome for over 30 years, correspondent, author of a comprehensive study of the growth of international terrorism, and of articles in many, many publications. Ms. Sterling, we're looking forward to hearing from you.

STATEMENT OF CLAIRE STERLING, JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR OF "THE TERROR NETWORK"

Ms. STERLING. Thank you, Madam Chairman, Senators, Congressmen. I hope this won't sound immodest if I say that the crime we are talking about would almost certainly never have even approached solution if members of the press like myself had not attempted to follow the available clues.

I can say from personal knowledge that none of the governments concerned really wanted to press this investigation to a conclusion, that all of them to some degree went to considerable length to avoid following the most promising indications, any indications that pointed eastward, to avoid looking the reality in the face, although I think all of them were reasonably sure, in a general way without specific or precise knowledge of details, who was behind this monstrous act.

It was very easy for a reporter to follow these clues. This was not a simple plot. If it had been a simple plot, it never would have been

plotted. There is no way that an act of this kind could have been conceived unless those behind it were several degrees removed, to the point where they could be totally assured of the impossiblity of direct smoking-gun-type evidence that could pin them to the crime: anything beyond circumstantial evidence and speculative conclusions.

A third thing about this crime is that it is not really a terrorist crime. Terrorist crimes are committed to frighten the audience, to spread panic, to spread confusion, in short, to destabilize, undermine the strength and solidarity and authority of the governments I am speaking of, the free governments of the Western World.

The whole phenomenon of terrorism in the last 10 or 12 years was used deliberately and artfully as a cover for an old fashioned state assassination attempt to eliminate physically a man who was an intolerable threat to the security of the Soviet Union. In the same way, the young man who was picked to carry out this act had an image created for him, a persona created for him, as the ultra form of—as the quintessence of a modern international terrorist going, as he said himself, beyond questions of ideology. He was neither a rightist, nor a leftist; neither black, nor red. He was only interested in terrorism for its own sake.

This may be true of the young man, but it is also true that the entire image we have been given of this young man was created patiently, step by step, starting as far back as 1977, to our knowledge. It may have begun before, but that's what we know about.

Another thing I think should be made clear about this crime before I talk about details is that it was not a Turkish crime. That, too, was meant to seem so. A very careful effort was made, a very elaborate effort was made to make this appear the work of a Turk convicted as a Fascist murderer in Turkey so that the world could be given the impression that this strange, Moslem, fanatic, turbulent, chaotic society, alien to our own Christian world, and yet a member of NATO, that this country was the country sending the emissary to kill the Pope.

So that as a second reward for those who were planning this operation, one could hope for a widening, a further widening of an unfortunately sad breach already between Turkey and the rest of its NATO partners, including the United States.

To go on to the question of the plot itself. Yes, it was clear from the minute, within hours of the attempt on the Pope's life that this young man was not a religious fanatic, he was not a nut case, he was not a crazy, and he was not acting alone. We know that there were at least two accomplices present in St. Peter's Square. We are reasonably close to certainty about one's identity. The other has never been identified, but he has been photographed running away from the scene with a gun in his hand.

We know also from the court's finding itself, because although the trial of Mehmet Ali Agca lasted only 2½ days, and was restricted totally to the discussion of whether or not he did point the gun and fire it at the Pope, that although that trial ended on that note, the judge conducting that trial and his assistants in drawing up their motivation for the life sentence which was published 2 months after the trial, said in their words, these are not mine, these are the official words of the court, "He did not act alone. He

was assisted by hidden forces involved in a vast international conspiracy." And, as a result of very strong Vatican pressure around that time, a couple of months after the trial, the investigation was reopened in Italy and a judge was assigned in the fall of 1981 to conduct the investigation into the international conspiracy, which is what he is doing to this day.

What could we find out about this young man besides? What made us believe, besides the fact that there were two accomplices evidently in the Square, that he was not acting alone?

A memorandum was found in his pocket, for example, with very detailed last minute instructions, to get hair dyed, to prepare the disguise for the getaway, prepare to catch the following train for Florence directly after the act, wear a cross, certain kind of clothes that should be worn, be careful what you eat, and so on; a memorandum judged by all the people involved, the courts, the police and so on, that he could not have written himself, a memorandum of notes that he took in Turkish as somebody gave him these last minute instructions.

We know that he spent $50,000 traveling around Europe, that he always paid in cash, that he is never known to have appeared in a bank. Somebody must have provided him with lump sums as he went along.

But I think what is more relevant to the certainty of an international plot in this case is what has come out now about the background of this young man, making it impossible for him to have been alone, crazed, or a religious fanatic killer.

The first and, I think, most sensational discovery about his past was my discovery in Turkey of the bank accounts that had been opened in his name starting in December 1977. Now, it is very hard in a short article or in a dramatic 1-hour film documentary to include the kind of detail that makes this so impressive and so convincing. The fact is that he in his own interrogation with the Italian police told them that he had gone to a Palestinian training camp in the summer of 1977 when he was 19 years old.

Mrs. FENWICK. Where?

Ms. STERLING. In Beirut. And he said it was the camp of George Habash who is of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine, and he said that he had been met by Teslim Tore who was the leader of the most hard-line, Marxist terrorist underground group, Turkish People's Liberation Army in Turkey, and who was an instructor in Habash's camp, and continued to be until the present war in Lebanon. Teslim Tore, he said, met him in Damascus, took him to Beirut to this camp, then took him back to Damascus and got him back into Turkey.

Three months after this, the first bank account was opened in his name in Turkey by someone forging his signature. He then withdrew the money in a different branch of the bank under his own name. Following that, four or five other bank accounts we know about, there may be many others we have not learned about, but I do have the Xerox copies of the documents opening these bank accounts, amounting to anywhere from $13,000 to $18,000 in all, over the following 13 months were paid into his account.

What is important about this is to understand, in the context of terrorism in Turkey in 1979, this was totally unusual. There were

thousands of terrorists killing each other, rightwing and leftwing, in this period, but they were small time terrorists who would have a gun put into their hand, perhaps a few dollars or a few Turkish lira to buy some dinner or coffee or something, and then they would turn the gun back in this sort of hot gun rotating system. Nobody, to my knowledge, received any kind of allowance to be a functioning terrorist because it was far too dispersed a situation for that, and certainly nobody, to my knowledge nor to the police in Turkey, could have conceivably received the sum of $13,000 to $18,000 in just over 1 year at a time when he was not known to the police and had not committed a terrorist act. He was not a terrorist—he was a sleeper. And nobody knew anything about him until—not only until the murder of the famous Turkish journalist Abdi Ipekci in February 1979, but until 6 months after that murder when an anonymous tip to the police brought the arrest of Mehmet Ali Agca, who confessed at once to having committed this terrorist murder of the editor, Abdi Ipekci.

What makes this much more suspect than we could tell from what has been published so far is that at the time of his arrest the offers of rewards for the finders of the murderers of Abdi Ipekci came in all from his own newspaper Milliyet and the Turkish Journalist Union to over $100,000. The anonymous caller who tipped off the police to pick up Agca never collected the reward. Now, for a Turk, for anybody to leave untouched a reward of over $100,000 is extraordinary. For a poor country, for students, for example, who are living on a few pennies a week as they were at that time, to have ignored the possibility of getting that sum is utterly extraordinary.

This, combined with the fact that he confessed so readily, however tough he was supposed to be, on this very suspicious tip to the police already suggests first we have it that he was collecting all this money in advance, that he was not a terrorist and had no terrorist record, that the police did not know his name until he was arrested on an anonymous tip, and then the person who tipped them off did not collect the huge reward money, and he confessed, tough as he was supposed to be, he confessed without a blink and without being tortured. During 11 days of interrogation, he was interrogated by the Ministry of the Interior and the police of Istanbul, he came out without a mark on him, said before the television cameras, "Yes, I killed Ipekci," as if he were talking about the weather.

He made it clear in his first day in court that—he said, "I did not really kill Ipekci, but I know who did, and I will reveal his name at the next session of the court." And before the next session of the court, he had escaped from the impregnable military prison of Kartal-Maltepe, where he had to go through eight heavily guarded doors to get out. It had never been done before in Turkey and probably will never be done again.

All of this creates a pattern of a man whose image has been created, who has been set up to play a certain role. Whether or not he actually was a killer of Ipekci, I don't know and I don't know if anybody will ever know, but certainly the circumstances under which he was arrested, interrogated, confessed, and tried suggests that this too was part of an elaborate scheme to use him for special

purposes. And I don't mean by that at that time people were thinking of using him for the plot to kill the Pope.

He was one of we don't know how many hundreds of people like him who may already have committed acts of this kind in Europe and we don't know that they did it. We may never be able to identify either the people or those who sent them committing crimes that may seem to us to be something else.

In his case, we have been able to follow enough clues to be able to identify this role. That is, the fact that he had a persona created for him as a rightwing terrorist killer. By the time he left Turkey, he was famous for this role.

I would like to specify here that this is the end of his Turkish career. After he escaped from the military prison and moved on into Europe, I believe that Turkish forces dealing with him were finished. That's why I said at the beginning of this discussion that I don't believe this was a Turkish crime. I believe that up until that point he was operating within the context of the terrorism raging in Turkey, rightwing and leftwing, and being used perhaps by secret services, security forces, rightwing, leftwing, manipulated on a scene where everybody was trying to frame everybody else, to put the responsibility right on left, left on right, for the worst case of raging terrorism in the world.

But once he left that prison and left Turkey, I believe, and I think the authorities, everybody who followed the case in Turkey believes as well, he was then handed on across the border to higher authorities interested in something far larger than the Turkish scene. And here is a key to what he did in May, the following May; his 50-day stay in Bulgaria.

I think, of course, the public can be baffled by references simply to the fact that he stayed in Bulgaria for 50 days as if this in itself is evidence of the guilt of the Bulgarian Secret Services. Of course, it is not in itself evidence of any such thing. It is an important indication of guilt because Agca was probably the most famous terrorist killer in Turkey. His picture had been on the front pages of every Turkish newspaper for weeks on end after his arrest and confession for the murder of the most famous journalist in Turkey, and again after his escape from an impregnable military prison.

The Bulgarian intelligence services are the closest observers of Turkish affairs probably anywhere in the world, acting on their own behalf and on behalf of the Soviet Union. They must know what is going on from day to day on the Turkish scene, and certainly what is going on in regard to the terrorist warfare that was raging up until the Army takeover in the fall of 1980.

Therefore, the fact that Agca could go to Bulgaria for 7 weeks on a false Indian passport, and he certainly isn't an Indian, in the name of Yoginder Singh, that he could stay in five or six different expensive hotels, that he had nothing to do, he was not working, he had no assignments, he was simply there, the fact that he came in on one passport and went out with another, the fact that he was told while he was there to meet a certain Turk called Omer Marsan living in Germany who did confirm later that he met him in a hotel room in Sofia, the fact that later he told the Italian judge investigating this case that he actually met the godfather of the Turkish mafia himself, Abuzer Ugurlu, in this hotel in Sofia,

the fact that he claims to have received the fourth passport he used to travel through Europe in Sofia also from the Turk who he had been told to see, who belonged to the Turkish smuggling ring operating out of Sofia. All of these things begin to heighten one's interest in the Bulgarian role.

Now, there are further indications of what happened to him in Bulgaria. We know, for example, the Gdansk agreement legitimizing solidarity in Poland was signed on the 31st of August 1980. Agca left Bulgaria on the 31st of August 1980, after a stay of 7 weeks. The passport he used to leave Bulgaria on that day was stamped with entry on the same day as exit. This was the main false passport he used to travel around Europe and the one he was carrying when he was found in Rome.

This passport had been perfectly counterfeited inside Turkey, smuggled out. It had a false exit stamp, I was assured by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, the exit stamp coming out of Turkey at Adinier was false, it was not shown to the authorities, it was smuggled. But the entry stamp into Bulgaria was not false, it was authentic. It was stamped for entry the day after it was supposed to have been stamped for exit, the 30th of August out of Turkey, the 31st into Bulgaria, carried by someone—it carried Agca's photograph, but it was carried by somebody else who was not Agca, and it was stamped with an authentic entry visa, and then Agca himself took it out, across the country, on the other side at the Yugoslav frontier, on the very same day, and again it was stamped authentically for exit.

Now, anybody who knows the workings of the Bulgarian police would understand that it is not possible to fiddle a passport in this way with a Turkish citizen who is the most celebrated terrorist, Fascist, fugitive, murderer, who could have been found in Turkey, who had spent 7 weeks in Bulgaria, and who received this passport with his photograph in it stamped and cleared by the Bulgarian authorities. I think this is a very damning indication of Bulgarian secret service responsibility.

Still more damning, Agca told the Italian police that he had met this Turk, Omer Marsan, in the Hotel Vitosha in Sofia. Omer Marsan, on the basis of a telephone number provided by Agca to the Italian police, was found by the German police in Munich and questioned for 24 hours. He confirmed his meeting with Agca in the Hotel Vitosha, Room 911. He confirmed the fact that he had received telephone calls many times after Agca left Bulgaria and moved on through Europe. He claimed he didn't know who Agca was until the attack on the Pope when he saw his photograph in the newspaper, which is really absurd because any Turk in Germany reading Milliyet newspaper, which they all do, would have seen that face a hundred times, and hundreds of Turks had signaled Agca's presence on the strength of that photograph in Germany.

The German police released Omer Marsan in 24 hours and they told me their reasons were that he had committed no crime in Germany, that he had answered all questions honestly and openly, and they had no reason therefore to hold him.

Nevertheless, Marsan was a lieutenant of this huge gun-running ring operating in Sofia called the Turkish arms mafia. We have

13-417 0 - 83 - 2

documented evidence of this from defectors of the same ring. This ring is run by a man called Abuzer Ugurlu, presently on trial in Istanbul for smuggling; who has a Bulgarian passport though he is a Turkish citizen; who owns a spacious villa in Sofia, a privilege generally reserved for high party functionaries in Bulgaria; who was operating a gun-running ring going into hundreds of millions of dollars a year, providing the bulk to the million weapons over a course of 10 years that had been found by the Turkish Army after the military takeover in 1980.

We have it also in documented testimony from defectors from this ring that Abuzer Ugurlu's Turkish armed mafia was under the direct control and supervision of the Bulgarian Secret Service. This is testimony of members of this ring. We have the same testimony tying Omer Marsan to this ring. And now, in the trial in Istanbul, too late for me to have written about this, we have testimony from Abuzer Ugurlu himself, the godfather, on trial, that he was the man who set up the export/import company in Munich where this Omer Marsan worked, the telephone number of which he had given to Agca whereby it was possible to find him. Only because Agca provided this phone number could the German police find this man.

Therefore, we have a direct tie-up between the man who had met Agca, admitted to meeting Agca in Bulgaria—he did not admit, but Agca claimed and there is reason to believe that he offered to procure Agca a false passport, admitted to his having called him many times over after he left Bulgaria. Agca claims that he even sent him to Nicia to meet with a Bulgarian called Mustafaef, presented to Agca also in Sofia by the same Omer Marsan in the same room, 911, of the Hotel Vitosha, who is almost certainly the Bulgarian control following Agca around all over Europe. We have these direct ties, as I say, now confirmed by the fact that the godfather himself, who was a direct operative of the Bulgarian Secret Service, and who has run this gun-running ring for rightwing and leftwing terrorists alike in Turkey for years, was directly involved with the man who became his emissary to deal with Agca from the time he entered Bulgaria.

That, I think, is pretty hard evidence of a collusion that cannot be explained in innocent terms. It seems to me that it is beyond normal skepticism to claim that this kind of 7-week stay, not just the fact of the stay, but this kind of 7-week stay in Bulgaria could have been innocent. It is, to me, who has written about politics in East and West Europe for 30 years, it goes without saying under these circumstances that the Bulgarian Secret Service, to put it in its minimum terms, was aware of every step made by Agca while he was in Sofia and, since it was directly in control of the group that had taken Agca under its wing, I think it fair to conclude that the Bulgarian Secret Service was running this operation.

Beyond that point, one can't go. It is up to all of you on the committee and to the public and to the authorities to then conclude whether or to what degree what was done by the Bulgarian Secret Service was done with the knowledge and consent of the KGB. I think anybody who is expert on Eastern European affairs would agree that of all the Eastern European states, the Bulgarians, a communist regime, is the most orthodox pro-Moscow, the most in-

flexibly loyal to Moscow, and the one whose secret services are the most tightly linked or at the services of Moscow.

The case essentially rests on this relay arrangement that was made of a man who came out of Turkey with a false personality created for him, who was then set up for 7 weeks in Bulgaria for the rest of his mission, who then went on to Europe and left a broad trail in which the only people he was known to have had contact with were neo-Nazi Gray Wolf terrorists from Turkey. He would make telephone calls from hotels on the hotel switchboard so that a record could be kept to Gray Wolf leaders in Hanover, for example. He carried a Browning gun to St. Peter's to kill the Pope, which still bore its original numbers which had not been filed off.

One would have to ask: How could the most amateur killer in a situation like this go to commit a crime like this without taking the numbers off his gun to avert identification? The numbers were on his gun for a reason, because they led also to a neo-Nazi gun dealer, another rightwing figure called Horst Grillmeier in Vienna, coming from a famous neo-Nazi family. But the Italian Military Secret Service in his report to the court after an investigation of Horst Grillmeier, who was the last known person to have handled the Browning before it reached Agca, stated that he was, whatever his appearances as a neo-Nazi, he was supplying guns to the international terrorist movement of all Europe right and left, that he was a frequent visitor to Libya, Syria, and Bulgaria, and that directly after his interrogation by the police on this case he disappeared, they presume him to be in Bulgaria.

So there we have the creation of a false picture so that within hours of the shooting the world press could be given reason to believe, apparently logical reason to believe, that this was a rightwing killing which had nothing to do either with leftwing forces, terrorists or otherwise, or with any states to the east of Rome.

I would like to stop now because I am sure that your questions would bring out more of what you would like to know than I might guess at.

Mrs. FENWICK. Briefly, because I know the Senators and Congressman Ritter will have questions and I don't want to preempt them, the question that seems to me most compelling is this: Have we any knowledge as to when His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, communicated to the Soviet Union that he would take off his crown and return to Poland if they invaded Poland? You said that date was May 31, 1981?

Ms. STERLING. No, May 13, 1981, was when he was shot, May 13.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Ms. STERLING. My understanding that the message to Brezhnev was sent in August 1980, early or middle August 1980, just before the legitimization of Solidarity with the signing of the contract at Gdansk. I'm not sure of this date. Perhaps Senator D'Amato, who had knowledge of this note, or Mr. Ledeen, who also did, would know more precisely than I.

Mrs. FENWICK. Because it seems to me that's a very significant connection.

Ms. STERLING. Very. Yes, of course, put together with the fact that on the 31st, at Gdansk, Solidarity did emerge as a legal free

labor movement in Poland and that Agca left Bulgaria on that very day. I think that those dates become quite interesting.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes, I do, too. Thank you. Yes, Senator D'Amato.

Mr. D'AMATO. Claire, I think first of all you have very cogently given us the picture, a picture that I think very few in the intelligence community want to acknowledge. For the life of me, I think it is important that the American people not be kept in the dark, but the facts, as you have presented them, be made known. Let reasonable people, intelligent people in an open society then make a determination to whatever extent it might carry them. I think, as you have outlined it, coming right to the Bulgarian Secret Police being an integral part of Agca, there can be no doubt, there is not any movement on the part of any people in Bulgaria that is not absolutely known. Foreigners don't come in and travel without their absolute knowledge. And to think that an infamous terrorist wanted, would be able to have the carte blanche run of the country without the complicity of the Bulgarians would be preposterous.

By the way, I posed this to the CIA when I came back on October 19. I also indicated to them that the Monsignor friend of mind had carried the communication through the Pope. The Monsignor had indicated to me that that communication, the gist of it was that he, the Pope, would go to the defense of his people in Poland for the Russians to move their troops into Poland. And you recall during those—there were periods of time when the situation was very tense. Literally from day to day, from hour to hour, the question was: Will the Russians move into Poland with their troops?

He was quite convinced that the Russians were behind the attempted assassination. I will attempt to get from him the exact date, as I've indicated to you privately. And, of course, after that briefing, when I came back and communicated this information to the CIA, I then called you and we began to compare some notes, that was just about a year ago.

I must commend you for your perserverance with no cooperation, I am sure, and much discouragement, I am sure, from many. I also had the opportunity to speak with probably one of the most knowledgeable individuals in terms of the Russians and their operations, former Ambassador Fensi, who was the Italian Ambassador to Moscow for 10 years, and a great student of their activities and their mannerisms and their operations. And the Ambassador conveyed to me the feeling that there was no doubt that there was a very active link involved in this activity, and he was deeply distressed with the fact that he saw an emerging pattern where the Russians had undertaken these kinds of activities in the past, that their network was a vast one disciplined, as illustrated by this, this one example. Again you said, and you pointed out quite correctly, Lord knows how many others, hundreds or thousands, there may be the image, the person created.

But his concern was that he has never seen the Russians move as quickly in eliminating someone, a threat, as they have in this particular case. And he had noticed an increased level of these kinds of things, a quicker response, whereas years ago they might wait 2 or 3 years to carry out a plot so that their hand could never be—never could there be that connection.

I have a number of questions, but let me simply say to you I commend you for making this public and for doing it in a very thorough, carefully documented manner, and I will speak to the Monsignor about getting you that information and maybe he'll even let me give you his name.

Ms. STERLING. Thank you.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Senator D'Amato. Senator Leahy, do you have any questions?

Mr. LEAHY. Just a couple, and then with apologies, I am going to have to leave to go, interestingly enough, to a meeting of the Senate Intelligence Committee. I was wondering, Ms. Sterling, have any of the people from the various U.S. intelligence agencies discussed your findings with you?

Ms. STERLING. No.

Mr. LEAHY. They have not. Have you had any reaction from the Vatican?

Ms. STERLING. I've been here since the article appeared. I haven't been back in Rome. I'm going this afternoon. So I may have had somebody looking for me, but I don't know.

Mr. LEAHY. So you have not had any contact with them since the article?

Ms. STERLING. No.

Mr. LEAHY. Are you aware of any—have they made any reaction that you know of, any public reaction?

Ms. STERLING. To the disclosure in this article? I'm not aware of any. I should say, perhaps I should have said at the start, that at the time of the trial, of Agca's trial, summer of a year ago, last July, the Osservatore Romano carried two very sharp editorials, in their circumspect way, but not as circumspect as normally they might have done, clearly indicating their great dissatisfaction with the closing of the case, the apparent closing of the case, with the trial of Agca himself and their dissatisfaction that this investigation was not being pressed further. Much the same kind of statement came from the Papal Secretary of State at that time.

I quote also, unfortunately it got lost on the cutting room floor, but there was a report by one of the best Vatican journalists in Italy, Francesco D'Andrea, some 40 days after the attack, indicating the Vatican's belief, and I know his sources or I wouldn't have cited him, indicating the Vatican's belief that some high level sources inside Turkey representing leftwing forces, either security forces or the then civilian ministries, the then civilian government before the army takeover, had been interested in helping as an anti-NATO maneuver with this operation, that they had groomed this young man and then turned him over to the Bulgarians for a future role to be played in Europe, whether against the Pope or against some other target which might have been also useful or advantageous in some way to the Eastern Europeans.

That is, the Vatican, I think, was thinking in these terms as he made it very clear that they had reached this conclusion on the basis of precise information provided to them by some western secret service, and that was by June 1981, some weeks after the attack.

Mr. LEAHY. But you're not aware of any reaction, either through the press arms of the Vatican, through official newspapers, or any-

thing else, to the article or to the question of a letter from the Pope to——

Ms. STERLING. No. I don't believe they have denied——

Mr. LEAHY [continuing]. President Brezhnev——

Ms. STERLING. No; I'm not aware. I haven't seen the Italian press.

Mr. LEAHY. But you're not aware of anything that they have said one way or the other about whether there was such a letter or not.

Ms. STERLING. No.

Mr. LEAHY. Did you make any direct inquiry of them in writing your article to ask them to either deny, affirm, or indicate no comment on the question of the letter?

Ms. STERLING. I didn't have the letter. The letter was reported by Marvin Kalb in his White Paper, but I did not know about it.

Mr. LEAHY. I'm sorry. Were you aware—maybe I should have prefaced that with a question. Were you aware in writing your article of the story of the letter?

Ms. STERLING. No; I had heard only in a general way that a letter had been sent, a very strong letter from the Pope, but that's all I was able to——

Mr. LEAHY. So you had not made any inquiry regarding it?

Ms. STERLING. No; I had not gone further. I was aware, of course, of all the other very important pressures as the crisis developed in Poland because that was public knowledge, it was reported to all the press in Rome at the time.

Mr. LEAHY. Thank you. Mrs. Sterling, this is the second time I've had an opportunity to hear you, first on the Judiciary Committee, and I appreciate the amount of time that you're willing to spend with us here and I'm delighted to have a chance to see you again. Madam Chairman, I'm going to have to go back to the——

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Senator, thank you. I have one brief question, and I know that Mr. Ritter will have questions. Have you been able to determine any connection between Mr. Habash and the group that trained Agca, and the PLO generally? Or do you know of anything that would connect other than this link the training camps of the PLO, extreme leftwing, in Lebanon, with the Bulgarian Secret Police or the KGB?

Ms. STERLING. Yes, the connections with Agca depend only on Agca's word. We have no confirmation so far that he actually went to this camp.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Ms. STERLING. But his description to the Italian police was extremely detailed in this case, and as we found —I have the text of his interrogations—and as we have found checking what the police could confirm or not confirm, when he just told a story without much detail, he was almost invariably lying. But when he described certain episodes in considerable detail, they checked out practically to the last point, and this was one of the episodes that he did describe in detail. Beyond that, I can't prove, no one can, that he was actually in the camp.

However, if his own version was true, it was a Habash camp. And there are no other connections I know about with the PLO and Agca. With the PLO and Habash and the Bulgarians, there are a great many connections, yes. For one thing, for many years, since

the early 1970's, Sofia has been a staging area for the transshipment of weapons. That is, of Eastern bloc weapons provided to Palestinian resistance groups in the Middle East, then transshipped to Sofia for shipment to terrorists all over Western Europe. I have described and documented this in the book I wrote last year. And there were in fact special headquarters maintained all during the seventies by one of the most important hardline leftwing terrorists, Ahmed Gabrille who kept headquarters in Sofia to be close to these operations, these arms traffic operations.

Mrs. FENWICK. In the Middle East, I see.

Ms. STERLING. A further connection of the Bulgarian in general with terrorism, and a most important one, has just come out in the last few months in Italy. On the occasion of Gen. Dozier's kidnapping, members of the Red Brigade confessed after his release that they had indeed been approached by the Bulgarian Secret Service with offers of money and weapons to keep up the good work of destabilizing Italy, and also I think in the hopes of extracting some military information from General Dozier.

In the course of that investigation, it turned out that one of the top functionaries of the Social Democratic Labor Federation, Kricholo, who was arrested on the accusation of having been the gobetween for the Bulgarians and the Red Brigade, after his arrest, some months after, he confessed to having been an agent of the Bulgarian Secret Service he said since 1977, although there is reason to believe that actually he was an agent from the sixties onward. And he confessed also to having received subsidies from the Bulgarian Secret Service to finance anti-NATO demonstrations in Italy.

Now, this is very hard stuff coming from the man who did it and who confessed to it, to the police, so that the Bulgarian role here has been underlined in a way none of us would have thought possible. None of us would have thought evidence of this kind could be brought to light, but it has come to light.

Mrs. FENWICK. Your knowledge is phenomenal. I am full of admiration for the detail.

Mr. D'AMATO. Madam Chairman, I would like to—I shall make my apologies to you and to the Commission. I have an Appropriations markup which is being conducted right now and, Claire, that determines who gets the money and where and we've got a couple of projects in New York I have to try to save. But let me thank you for coming forth. Good seeing you again. I'll get in contact with you. And I thank the chairman for her courtesy.

I believe that it is a shocking situation when you who have firsthand tracked down and gathered these facts, garnered them, have not been approached by the intelligence community, been briefed or debriefed, had someone seek you out unless they know all of these wonderful things, or for whatever reason, because then they are not charged with the responsibility, maybe they don't want to loan credibility to your story and to the facts, that's possibly a reason why they've stayed away. I'm deeply disturbed by it. But I commend you for a magnificent job.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Senator. I know that my colleague will have some questions. Congressman Ritter.

Mr. RITTER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I, too, would like to commend you for your courage, your encyclopedic knowledge, your perseverance. I think what you have done is an absolutely striking and shining example of the value of a free press. Think about it. The involved governments have stayed away from this hot potato for a variety of reasons. We are hearing from our colleague from New York that the intelligence services have seemed to shy away from this subject like a hot potato. It is the press, it is the free press. To date, it is Claire Sterling and Marvin Kalb who have really carried the ball on this issue. I think that deserves tremendous commendation.

You know, they say that the best way to protect one's self against reprisals from Communist adversaries is to have some notoriety. You have that notoriety, but let me ask you on a personal level, do you ever wonder if anybody's walking around with a poisoned umbrella tip? Do you worry about rainy days?

Ms. STERLING. Of course, who doesn't? Congressman, I would really not like to claim the role of a heroine. I do my job, and I know hundreds of colleagues in Italy, for example, exposed to a very, very dangerous, highly organized professional terrorist band, the Red Brigade, who daily risk their lives, risk being kidnapped, crippled for life, or being shot in the face and killed, and who go ahead and do their job. I can't claim to any special heroism.

Mr. RITTER. Let's commend them, too. The Roman magistrate who continues to work on this case, his name is Judge Filiario Martella, is that correct?

Ms. STERLING. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. Are you aware of the status? Is there any public information of the status of this Roman magistrate? And I am not prying into the privacy of the judicial chambers, but is there public information that we don't know about here that perhaps——

Ms. STERLING. Judge Martella invented the clam in human form. He is the tightest lipped, closed mouthed judge in Italy. It is, of course, a penal offense in Italy for a judge to reveal what he is gathering in the course of an investigation, but this has always been honored in the breach——

Mr. RITTER. Is there any view of the timing of his—other than the breach——

Ms. STERLING. Well, the little bit we can find out, those of us who have tried, I've seen him several times, I've told him things but he's never told me anything, I must say.

Mr. RITTER. I hear the same from other journalists who have been working with Judge Martella.

Ms. STERLING. But he has let it be known that in perhaps 3 or 4 months there may be some developments of interest. We do know that he went to Turkey this summer during the trial of the godfather, Abuzer Ugurlu, because Agca had told him, Martella, Agca has begun to talk to Judge Martella, the judge has admitted this without saying what Agca has said, but he has admitted to the Associated Press that Agca did begin to talk in interrogations late last May. On the strength of that, one arrest was made in Switzerland on the charge of direct complicity in the crime. And on the strength, evidently of what Agca told him, he went to Istanbul to

interrogate the godfather, indicating that his own thinking by now is moving along those lines. And that's all we know.

We know that he was there, he found out what the godfather was saying in the courtroom and out of the courtroom to the Turkish police, involving questions like the offer of a three million deutschmark bribe to Agca about a few weeks before the attack by a courier of the godfather's smuggling ring. The names were known. This was leaked to the press from I don't know where, but not from the judge.

Mr. RITTER. It is interesting that this godfather operates out of Sofia to a very large extent and that given the relations between the Turkish people and the Bulgarian people as well as the Turkish Government and Bulgarian Government over centuries being so eminently hostile for a Turkish mobster to be operating out of a villa in Sofia is rather—is just an incredible and unique situation that would not exist without some far deeper, far more sophisticated motive.

Ms. STERLING. I certainly agree, Congressman. It is not just gunrunning. This ring also smuggles heroin into Europe to finance the purchase of the guns that go back into Turkey, and it runs a string of closed trailer trucks, and according to the voluminous testimony of defectors from the ring, some of them presently in prison in Germany, others in Turkey, these trucks are also shipped to use to come down the Danube with such shipments, they are cleared without inspection by Bulgarian customs, escorted to the Turkish frontier, where they are then turned over, and so on.

The other important fact is that the heroin route is developed by the same rightwing couriers in Western Europe. That is, this Turkish arms mafia operating out of this Communist country under the direct control and supervision of the Bulgarian Secret Service is making use of rightwing Turkish terrorist exiles——

Mr. RITTER. To cover their tracks.

Ms. STERLING [CONTINUING]. As couriers for drugs and for gunrunning to pass back into Turkey for the destabilization of Turkey. It is quite a wicked scheme, I think.

Mr. RITTER. This Bulgarian connection is obviously quite firm to all but the most skeptical of skeptics. Given this firm Bulgarian connection, what can you say, having studied for years this part of the world, having studied for years the development of international terrorism, what can you say about the connection between these kinds of governmental operations, foreign policy operations of Bulgaria, secret service operations of Bulgaria, what can you say about the coherence or the links between these connections and the Soviet Union, the KGB Soviet Government organs?

Ms. STERLING. In the case of Turkey, which has been the most dramatic and terrifying example of destabilization by terrorism, the Soviet role is direct. There is evidence of that. I haven't gotten around to writing it, but I will, and there are others who I am sure will be doing the same.

Mr. RITTER. Does the Bulgarian Secret Service contain in it Russian citizens?

Ms. STERLING. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. The Bulgarian Secret Service has in it Russian citizens?

Ms. STERLING. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. Are those Russian citizens placed in key positions in the Bulgarian Secret Service?

Ms. STERLING. Yes, in the part of the Bulgarian Secret Service we are talking about in this operation, yes.

Mr. RITTER. So there is a direct link between Soviet citizens, Soviet KGB, security police, and the Bulgarian Secret Service. Does the Bulgarian Secret Service embark on major international initiatives without, given the history of Bulgaria's close links to the Soviet Union, does the Bulgarian Secret Service embark on its own independent international initiatives as a matter of course?

Ms. STERLING. No. I gather the last week or so some effort has been made by word of mouth in Moscow whereby Russian leaders indicate to foreign diplomats that they are dissatisfied with the Bulgarian Secret Service because it isn't telling them everything it is doing, but this is an ex post facto arrangement that is not very convincing.

Mr. RITTER. Yes, I've heard the same rumors. Doesn't that almost clinch the connection between the Soviet KGB and the operations of the Bulgarian Secret Service since the Soviet KGB in a sense is responsible——

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you. I think you know this is fairly endless, but we have other witnesses, and perhaps you wouldn't mind—[inaudible].

Ms. STERLING. Thank you.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thanks very much indeed for your testimony and your expertise.

[Ms. Sterling's written statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF CLAIRE STERLING, JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR OF "THE TERROR NETWORK"

Key officials in every Western government concerned in this investigation have told me privately that the Soviet Union was behind the hidden forces behind Mehmet Ali Agca. None will say so publicly, and it certainly cannot be proved to the last detail. However incomplete the evidence, though, the established facts do make a discernible picture when pieced together. The important facts are these:

Pope John Paul II was undoubtedly the victim of an organized conspiracy. The Vatican itself has said as much, through the Papal Secretary of State and Osservatore Romano. There were at least two accomplices at the scene, observed and described or photographed by several witnesses. Agca himself had been kept in ample funds (an estimated $50,000 over a year and a half), was plainly getting backup help as he went along (the Pensione Isa reservation was made in fluent Italian), and got last-minute instructions (found among his effects). Italian authorities, in particular, take it for granted that Agca's every move was made on somebody's orders; the then head of a Parliamentary watchdog committee on Italy's secret services, Francesco Mazzola, has told a television audience that Agca's "control" was "probably the Bulgarian secret agent Mustafaef." Above all, we can be sure now that Agca has been at the disposal of some faceless paymaster since the age of nineteen.

The giveaway was that first bank account opened in his name, in December 1977. Implicated eighteen months later in his first terrorist hit (the Ipekci murder), he was seen to be acting out a role from start to finish. (Former Interior Minister Hasan Fehmi Gunes has said so, and he was there.) The circumstances of Agca's arrest, interrogation and confession in that case plainly suggest that the whole show was rigged. There could certainly be no doubt, after his escape from the prison-fortress of Kartal-Maltepe, about the high value his patrons placed on his secrets, and his silence.

He probably didn't realize then that the first pieces were falling into place in the building of his image, or persona, as an unregenerate fascist killer.

Poised for flight from his homeland, he was then instructed by "somebody in Turkey" (whom he refused to name) to make contact with Omer Mersan in Sofia, where he thus came under the Godfather's wing. Everything vitally affecting his course of action from then on begins with that summer in Bulgaria: the Browning

he used to shoot the Pope, the passport assuring an almost magical safety on his travels around Europe, his meeting with "Mustafaef" at the Hotel Vit[illegible], the fact that he was kept in ample funds from the day he left this communist state for the West.

Practically none of the numberless theories about the attempt on John Paul's life can be made to fit all these verifiable facts—the alleged sinister designs, say, of Col. Quadaffi, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Israeli Mossad, the PLO, the CIA. The presumably obvious solution doesn't really fit either. The far right does look guilty, if only by association. While Agca was never a Gray Wolf bigshot, hovering only at the fringes of the movement, he assuredly moved in rightist circles at home and abroad. But what good would it do rightists in Turkey, or their European counterparts, to assassinate the Supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church—especially under communist Bulgaria's auspices?

One might equally ask what good could come of it for the Turkish left. None at all, is the answer in both cases. Even the radical leftist Hasan Fehmi Gunes gave me that answer. "I cannot put emphasis on either the right or the communists for killing the Pope," he said. "I see no advantage for either inside Turkey."

The most widely credited theory among Turks close to the case involves a kind of osmosis, whereby Turkey's rightwing forces were infiltrated and manipulated in the Soviet Union's interest. This is how they believe it happened:

Mehmet Ali Agca was spotted early and picked up for future use on the turbulent domestic scene. He may never have known who really paid and controlled him, in all likelihood somebody from a leftwing faction of the Turkish security forces (MIT) working closely with the Russians. Familiar with rightwingers since childhood, he was doubtless encouraged to keep moving in their circles. Whether or not he was also encouraged to help murder Abdi Ipekci, he was surely persuaded to take the fall for that killing, covering for others and pinning the blame on the right. He must also have been assured of getting sprung from prison soon. At once cocky and uneasy behind bars, he sent menacing signals from the courtroom to make sure the promise was kept.

Once freed, he was too notorious to keep on in Turkey, and evidently too useful to be terminated. Rather than have him killed, his Turkish patrons passed him on to other security forces working directly with the KGB.

The furious argument inside Turkey has to do not so much with the truth of this version as with the identity of Agca's Turkish patrons. Few doubt that a number of political and security police must have been involved towards the end, and heavy suspicion has centered on the Interior Ministry controlling them, under what was then a militantly leftwing socialist government. As the man in charge at the time, Hasan Fehmi Gunes has naturally been at the core of the controversy.

Gunes has been interrogated several times by the martial law command since the army took over: partly on his own account and partly because of his brother and sons. The brother, Misamettin, was arrested in November 1981 as a leader of the underground communist party, TKP, which backed practically all of Turkey's leftwing terrorists throughout the '70s. (Its clandestine radio in East Berlin currently broadcasts a weekly "Agitator's Notebook" to Turkey.) The sons, Kutlan and Utkan, were arrested around the same time as activists in the TKP's own terrorist arm, Dev-Sol. Hasan Fehmin Gunes himself has been a pro-Soviet Marxist since at least 1973 and an arch opponent of NATO as well. Though under "continuing investigation," he told me, he is not under arrest. It is only in court that his guilt or innocence can be established.

Without naming names, high Vatican officials appear to share this prevailing view of Turkey's role. "The plot against the Pope was elaborated in collaboration between the Soviet KGB and a certain sector of the Turkish secret services, tied to a powerful group in their country which wants to force Turkey out of NATO and into the Soviet orbit," wrote Francesco D'Andrea of Il Giornale Nuovo, whose Vatican sources were excellent. While convinced of a conspiracy all along, he said, Vatican leaders had reached this more detailed conclusion only forty days after the Pope was shot, on the basis of "precise indications . . . passed through diplomatic channels."

The thought could hardly have occurred to many Westerners, to whom Turkish affairs seem hopelessly remote. "By far the more popular view in the West—indeed, reaction around the globe—is that the Pope must have been shot because he was a Pole." And this, too, is probably right.

Pope Wojtyla is by no means an aggressive anti-Soviet hawk; the search for a modus vivendi between communism and Catholicism has been a cornerstone of his Vatican policy. But he is undeniably the father of Poland's Solidarity trade union movement, which could never have been born without his blessing. As we have seen

since martial law was declared in Warsaw, Solidarity was an intolerable threat to the very foundations of the Soviet Empire.

If that were the Russian's sole motive, however, why pick a Turk to fire the gun? It was the first question Turkey's stricken citizens—pious but not fanatic, fundamentalist Moslems—asked themselves. "My God! Why a Turk?" they said to me over and over again.

The Turk was there at St. Peter's to tell Christendom that Islamic Turkey, sole Moslem state in the Atlantic Alliance, was an alien, chaotic, devious and vaguely sinister country that did not belong in NATO. A Turk who happened also to be a convicted fascist murderer was all the better in this part, especially after leaving Gray Wolf tracks straight across a continent from the Bosporus to the Tiber.

There is reason to believe that Mehmet Ali Agca was not only used, but betrayed. Experts in Rome's DIGOS are convinced that he was counting on his two accomplices to create a diversion at the Vatican so that he could slip away. Instead, they ran away themselves, on orders. The Turkish Gray Wolf, his persona firmly established, was meant to be caught, with his Browning traceable to a Nazi gun dealer in Vienna. "He was not in much of a position to bargain after that," said a high DIGOS official. If he talked, he would just be left to rot in jail. If not, maybe—maybe—his patrons might spring him again."

As in Istanbul previously, Agca talked and didn't talk, revealing just enough to send a defiant and desperate message to his patrons. He is still waiting for an answer, from backers who may have no further use for him, whose faces he may never have seen, and whose true connections, perhaps, he never knew.

Some day, Agca may tell his secrets to a sympathetic Italian judge, who would doubtless pass them on to an apprehensive Italian government. In Italy, as nearly everywhere in the West, governing leaders could hardly welcome hard evidence of Soviet Russia's complicity in a terrorist hit deliberately designed to outrage and shock the world. The impact on international relations might be shattering. The temptation to look the other way might prove irresistible again, as it has so frequently before.

Mr. RITTER. Madam Chairman, we should point out that Ms. Sterling actually stayed over an extra several weeks in the United States to accommodate us for this hearing.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Mr. Ritter, and thank you, indeed, Ms. Sterling. And now we will hear from Mr. Ledeen, Michael Ledeen, who has been an aide to Secretary Haig, who is a senior fellow at Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, and indeed I have known Mr. Ledeen and we have worked together in the past, and I am very glad to welcome you here. I have no statement and I presume my colleague has none. So if you have a statement, Mr. Ledeen, we'd be happy to hear it, or you could leave it for the record, or you could condense it and have questions, whichever you prefer.

Mr. LEDEEN. I'll be glad to leave it for the record.

[The statement referred to follows:]

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. LEDEEN, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

I am delighted to appear before this Commission and reiterate some of the things I have been saying about international terrorism.

Terrorism is a matter of concern to every citizen of a democratic society, simply because it threatens our freedoms and our lives. My concern is that of a person who wishes to live in an open and free society, and not that of a person who is opposed to terrorism simply because it carries a particular political or national label.

Nonetheless, I am also convinced that our task is rendered more urgent by the fact that so many terrorist organizations get support from the Soviet Union and its many surrogates around the world. I do not think there should be much doubt about this matter. The Russians train PLO terrorists in the Soviet Union, supervise the training of terrorists from all over the world in Czechoslovakia—or at least they did until recently, according to a leading defector, General Jan Sejna—and work hand in glove with countries like Libya, Cuba and South Yemen in the training of terrorists.

The British press reports laconically that the killer of Lord Mountbatten got Soviet training in Libya; PLO leaders openly brag of their training in the Soviet Union; the first generation of Red Brigades leaders beat a regular path between Italy and Prague, long the headquarters of Soviet support for, and influence and control over, clandestine Communist operations in Italy.

The recent Israeli advance in Lebanon uncovered additional evidence of the interlocking nature of international terror, and its close ties to the Soviet Union. And just the other night on television, and a few weeks ago in the Readers Digest, we saw and read evidence suggesting a Soviet role in the attempted murder of Pope John Paul II.

Finally, last year we were all concerned about the possibility that the President of the United States had been targetted by a foreign country.

Terrorism, then, concerns me both because of its intrinsic threat to the kind of society in which I wish to live, and because it is so closely linked to the objectives of our major adversary.

Mrs. FENWICK. Tell us briefly, if you could summarize it, what your impression of all this is and what information you have.

Mr. LEDEEN. My statement was a general one, Madam Chairman, because I am not a specialist on things Turkish or Bulgarian, and I have not investigated the question of the assassination of the Pope as such. So that the statement I made was one about terrorism in general, and I just wanted to make two general points from the standpoint of policymakers and standpoints of citizens.

That was that, first, the concern about terrorism is one that any citizen concerned about an open and democratic society must share because that is what terrorism threatens and where it succeeds, it succeeds in transforming a free and open society into a closed and terrorized society, whether the terrorists themselves come to power or whether the State succeeds in defending itself by effective repression.

Second, I wanted to express a concern which I have expressed before in other committees, that the task of fighting terrorism is made much more difficult because of the clear links between international terrorism and the Soviet Union. I again expressed amazement that there continues to be so much doubt about this when on the open record we know that the Russians have trained PLO terrorists in the Soviet Union for years, that they had supervised the training of terrorists from all over the world in Czechoslovakia, and that they have been working hand in glove with countries like Libya, Cuba, and South Yemen for years in the training of these terrorists. Much more information has come out of Lebanon since the Israeli invasion and I'm told that much more will be forthcoming in the next weeks and months as the Israelis sort through an incredible volume of information.

Finally, I wanted to remind us all that we had ourselves some concern about this sort of thing when there was evidence that the Libyans were attempting to assassinate our own president.

These were the points I addressed.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes. Do you know anything about that letter that His Holiness sent to Mr. Brezhnev?

Mr. LEDEEN. Yes; I do. I believe I had information similar to Senator D'Amato's. I passed that to the Secretary.

Mrs. FENWICK. Was the date of that in August of 1980, am I correct?

Mr. LEDEEN. I am not really positive about the date. I got the information in the autumn of 1980.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Mr. LEDEEN. And was told that the letter had been sent and that Brezhnev had received it, and the contents as described to me were, if anything, stronger than I heard them described earlier this morning. It was described to me as a letter which said in effect, if you Russians go into Poland, I, as a Polish patriot, will feel compelled to lay down my crown and go to Poland to lead the resistence, or words to this effect.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes.

Mr. LEDEEN. And my understanding is that the Secretary himself had this confirmed from several additional sources.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Mr. LEDEEN. So I had taken it as established for some time.

Mrs. FENWICK. You have spoken of the direct linkage between the Soviet Union and these various terrorist groups and training camps. Could you be a little more specific? In other words, where are they? What evidence is there?

Mr. LEDEEN. There is so much that one hardly knows where to begin. The easiest public sources, the Canadian television documentary on Russia and international terrorism where an official PLO spokesman, the one at the United Nations, for example, happily confirmed that PLO terrorists were trained in various locations in the Soviet Union and the Canadian journalists showed maps and locations of camps and people who had been trained there and so forth.

We have the testimony to these links from Europeans ranging from the German Interior Minister to the President of Italy to the Prime Minister of Spain, all of whom have referred to these links publicly. You have case after case of terrorists captured beating the same path between South Yemen, Beirut, Prague in some cases, and Western Europe. And then in the case of Cubans, there is just really an overwhelming body of information, some of it classified, but much of it unclassified.

I just refer you to Stephen Rosenfeld's piece in the Washington Post some months ago where he said any journalist who wanted to investigate the connections between Cuba/Nicaragua on the one hand and the terrorist movement in El Salvador on the other would find it is under every rock in Central America.

So the stuff is not hard to come by, it is just a question of whether you want to see it.

Mrs. FENWICK. I think it is clear from what you said that the purpose of terrorism is to destabilize the country and to bring fear into the hearts of the people.

Mr. LEDEEN. I'll tell you, Madam Chairman, I am not one of those who believes in master plans, global master plans, and I think that terrorism is something that the Soviets have always supported in a general way because they consider it a legitimate arm of state policy. I think that it serves different roles in different cases.

I think that in Western Europe, for example, there is a difference between the goal of terrorism, say, in Italy, and the goal of terrorism, say, in Spain. Although from the standpoint of the countries involved, it is a distinction without a difference. In the case of Italy, I imagine that the goal is to make the country so dangerous

that it becomes a difficult place for NATO to remain, and that would be the strategic objective. In the case of Spain, it would be to provoke political repression of a form that would make Spanish entry into Europe and into NATO unpalatable to other West Europeans and things of this sort.

So I think that it may well vary from country to country. What is clear is that in the last 10 years the Russians have invested an enormous amount of resources into developing an international terrorist movement and the dimensions of the terrorist training operation in Lebanon, which are only now coming to light, I think attest to all of that.

Mrs. FENWICK. Was that one of the primary places?

Mr. LEDEEN. Yes, indeed.

Mrs. FENWICK. Are they being trained in Libya, too, or is that not a good place to train on account of Mr. Quadaffi's——

Mr. LEDEEN. No, no, lots have been trained in Libya, and we testified to that on the record last year.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see. I have other questions, but I know Mr. Ritter will have some.

Mr. RITTER. Perhaps briefly. Are you at all familiar with the situation of Bulgaria and its relations with Communist-sponsored terrorism?

Mr. LEDEEN. No; I'm not.

Mr. RITTER. Are you at all familiar with the linkages between the Soviet Union and the Bulgarian Government and the Soviet intelligence services and the Bulgarian intelligence services?

Mr. LEDEEN. Yes; I am.

Mr. RITTER. Could you please comment regarding what you have heard here today in testimony. I would like some of your views on these particular linkages, particularly the foreign policy initiatives of Bulgaria. Does Bulgaria take upon itself foreign policy initiative of assassination in the West? Is that a normal——

Mr. LEDEEN. I would like to try to put in a slightly different context, if I may, Congressman. The first is——

Mr. RITTER. Go right ahead.

Mr. LEDEEN [continuing]. A decision of the sort to assassinate the Pope. If this were a bloc decision, a decision made anywhere in the Soviet bloc, it could in my opinion only be made at the very highest level. So I think that you must be talking about a Politburo level decision.

Mr. RITTER. A Politburo level, which Politburo?

Mr. LEDEEN. U.S.S.R., Moscow. I have heard a lot of speculation about Bulgarian service, Russian service, KGB, or Bulgarian Secret Service, but this is a political decision, this is not an operational decision. This is not the kind of thing that any intelligence service could decide to do on its own. This is a strategic move, and, as such, can only come from the highest levels of the Soviet Government. So I think we would confuse the analysis if we insisted on looking at this as a secret service problem, an intelligence service problem. It is not. This is a Politburo level decision.

Mr. RITTER. When you describe this term "the highest levels of the Soviet Government," what do you mean by the highest levels of the Soviet Government?

Mr. LEDEEN. I mean the Politburo.

Mr. RITTER. The Politburo. Is this the kind of decision that the head of the KGB who was also a member of the Politburo, Andropov—is that correct?

Mr. LEDEEN. He is now.

Mr. RITTER. He is now, who is now a member of the Politburo, is this the kind of decision he would make?

Mr. LEDEEN. He can't make it on his own, if I understand the workings of the Soviet Union correctly. No KGB director would dare make such a decision by himself.

Mr. RITTER. Then who? Who in the Soviet Union, who in the Politburo makes this decision?

Mr. LEDEEN. Congressman, we're not very good at information on the knowledge about how the Politburo makes decisions, but our general understanding is that this is a collective decision.

Mr. RITTER. How many members are there in the Politburo?

Mr. LEDEEN. Well, you'd have to look at the specific meeting like this one and figure out how many people were there, if you want to be so specific. But the general answer is that it is a decision made by the executive branch of the Soviet Government. That is to say, those, that handful of people who matter.

Mr. RITTER. Is this the kind of decision that the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would make?

Mr. LEDEEN. No, I don't believe any single individual would dare make this decision by himself.

Mr. RITTER. But, I mean, would he be in on such a decision? Would he be part of that collective leadership that made such a decision?

Mr. LEDEEN. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. So what you are saying is that since Bulgarian Secret Service do not take independent foreign policy initiatives even in their own country, it would have to come from their own political leadership, and what you are saying is that this kind of secret service is intimately linked or in fact led by the secret service of the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union secret service does not make independent political strategic judgments, that if such a decision were made, it would be made at the highest levels of the Soviet Government by the executive committee, executive level of the Politburo?

Mr. LEDEEN. Yes. I don't mind crossing the t's and dotting the i's for you. If you reach the conclusion that the Bulgarian secret service was intimately involved in the plot to assassinate the Pope, then I think you must reach the conclusion that the Politburo was similarly involved. I don't think there's any other way to analyze it.

Mr. RITTER. I thank the gentleman.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Mr. Ritter. I have one short question. Is there any reason to believe that the PLO was involved in this assassination attempt on the Pope, or was that purely KGB/Bulgarian, and so on?

Mr. LEDEEN. Madam Chairwoman, I have to repeat what I said at the beginning. These are questions for Claire and not for me. I do not——

Mrs. FENWICK. OK. Thank you.

Mr. LEDEEN. The only element of the case with which I am familiar is the question of the letter from the Pope to Brezhnev.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you. I see our colleague, Congressman Bingham from New York, has joined us. He may have some questions.

Mr. BINGHAM. Thank you, Madam Chairman, I have no questions.

Mrs. FENWICK. We have one more witness. Thank you, Mr. Ledeen. The next witness is Mr. Atanas Slavov, who is a native of Bulgaria, and worked at the Institute for Fine Arts in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Mr. Slavov is also a member of the Bulgarian Guild of Film Producers and wrote scripts for several prize-winning films. He emigrated from that country in 1976 and has continued to work as a writer. He was awarded a Ford Foundation grant and published "Bulgarian Literature of the Thaw" in 1981. He also has been a fellow at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian. Is Mr. Slavov in the room?

You have a statement, Mr. Slavov, and it is short. We'd be happy to have you read it or enter it in the record, whichever you prefer.

Mr. SLAVOV. I think I'll read it, if you don't mind.

STATEMENT OF ATANAS SLAVOV, BULGARIAN EMIGRE

Mr. SLAVOV. First, in this statement I am expressing only my personal views. Since I am a professional writer and have never been connected with secret work either here or in Bulgaria, I do not have direct knowledge of the subject of our hearing on terrorism.

After I emigrated from Bulgaria in 1976, I have written about my experiences in Bulgaria. Apparently, the Bulgarian authorities, for reasons I do not entirely understand, found my writings to be offensive. As a result, in 1981 I was sentenced in absentia to 9 years of imprisonment by a Bulgarian court. Therefore, involuntarily I now have some personal knowledge of some of the methods of the Bulgarian Secret Police.

Four years ago, in New York, I was introduced to a recent defector from Bulgaria. This man claimed to be the former chief of the Sofia Department for Criminal Offenses under the Ministry of the Interior. He described operations of the Bulgarian police and security apparatus, including the monitoring of all correspondence. It was from him that I learned for the first time that every department in the Bulgarian State Security Service is directly supervised by a KGB officer. This information was later confirmed by an alleged high-ranking Bulgarian security officer who was interviewed in the BBC film about the execution of Georgy Markov. Therefore, I concluded that the Bulgarian secret police is in effect controlled by the Soviet KGB.

I would like to turn now to a brief description of my personal knowledge of the Markov case. In September 1978, the exiled Bulgarian writer, Georgy Markov, was killed in London. For some time, Markov had been broadcasting on Radio Free Europe material critical of the Bulgarian Party leader, Todor Zhivkov. The common assumption is that Mr. Markov was executed precisely for this reason.

Two months before Markov was killed, I visited him in London. At that time, Markov repeatedly told me in the presence of his wife that he had been warned by a visitor that the decision had been made "on the highest level" that the Bulgarian secret police should kill Markov. The method chosen for execution was poison. Since Markov knew that his visitor had connections with the Bulgarian security police, he took his warning very seriously. For example, when we visited a neighbor who had known Markov for 15 years, he would not drink the coffee she served. Later I learned that Markov had indeed been killed by a poison called, I think, ricin. The Markov incident convinced me that the Bulgarian secret police does perform political murders abroad. Of course, I have no idea how often.

Mrs. FENWICK. I wonder if you could tell us, Mr. Slavov, why would the Bulgarian security service or secret police be concerned to facilitate the assassination of the Pope? What would be their motive in such?

Mr. SLAVOV. I don't think that the Bulgarian security forces would have a motive of their own.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Mr. SLAVOV. And if they participated in this, as we all assume they might have, that was, I suppose, maybe—if they did—that was doing a service for the——

Mrs. FENWICK. KGB.

Mr. SLAVOV [continuing]. KGB. I don't think that the Bulgarian strategy or political objectives have anything to do with the Pope or his doings at this stage. I'm not aware of that.

Mrs. FENWICK. You have no knowledge of the letter of the Pope written in August of 1980 as being in any way a spur to activity on the part of the KGB or any other Warsaw Pact country in the determination to assassinate him?

Mr. SLAVOV. I heard this matter about the letter being brought in front of the hearing a couple of times since we started this morning. I wonder whether you would like me to comment on that.

Mrs. FENWICK. If you have something to tell us, I think——

Mr. SLAVOV. Well, I'll just tell you what I think about it.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes.

Mr. SLAVOV. I don't think that that letter specifically might have been the reason for the Pope to be killed. I believe that the plot against him could have existed before that. Now, it is amazing that—I can't believe that a plot like that should be decided upon, plotted and executed in just a couple of months. I think that in the materials that we have about Agca we obviously see that he was sensitive about the Pope long before Solidarity ever started. And I think that reason is obvious.

Now, the Soviet security strategy works on a larger scale. Unfortunately, they look at things from a greater distance than we do, and there was a very sensitive thing the first day the Pope took his office; he was thinking about the reunification of the Catholic Church—the Vatican—and the East Orthodox Church, which is strategically the most sensitive thing that might have worried the Soviets from the very beginning.

You know that in the Soviet Union there is a very strong conservative movement. This conservative movement is very strong

now in other East European countries and, of course, besides the Catholic Church, which is so strong in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, there are other alternative ideologies in Eastern Europe, one of those being the East Orthodox Church, and the Pope openly stated that he would want to see this reunification. That's why he went to see, he wanted to see the patriarch in Istanbul who is the most authoritative figure in the East Orthodox Church, and that was the time when we see the rightest forces in Turkey and Agca, whom I don't know whether he was leftist or rightist, but whatever he was, he already made statements that he is thinking about punishing the Pope for his infiltration of the ideological, or religious, or whatever establishment of that part of the world. You know that conservative Turks are very anti-Greek—more than they are anti-Soviet.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see, I see, thank you, Mr. Slavov. Any questions, Mr. Bingham?

Mr. BINGHAM. No.

Mrs. FENWICK. Mr. Ritter?

Mr. RITTER. I would like to commend you on your sensitivity to some of these issues. Was Georgy Markov the first friend of yours?

Mr. SLAVOV. I've known him for some 25 years. I have a linguistic problem. When I say "a friend", that is more than Markov was to me, but in the terms you would use that word, I would say he was a friend. I knew everything he thought about, worried about, and he knew what I did.

Mr. RITTER. Are you familiar with the circumstances—you are familiar with the details of his assassination?

Mr. SLAVOV. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. Yes. The technology used to convey the poison into the body of Georgy Markov, was it very sophisticated technology? Are you familiar with that?

Mr. SLAVOV. Well, I saw what the newspaper said.

Mr. RITTER. As a former engineer, it consists of making extremely tiny spherules, hollow spherules, titanium hollow spherules. I can tell you that the Soviet technology in titanium exists and the Bulgarian technology does not exist. These tiny hollow spherules are injected, pierced into the—they are so small that they can be put into the tip of a hypodermic needle. This is the kind of technology that is not emanating from Bulgaria. Is that your—are you familiar with this kind of technology? Is it probably a Soviet technology, in your view?

Mr. SLAVOV. Yes, well, I have a knowledge about Bulgarian technology, and industry, and so on. I don't believe the thing that you described and was described in the newspapers could have been produced in Bulgaria, I don't think that would be produced there.

Mr. RITTER. You mentioned in your testimony several things, that the Bulgarian secret police, that every department in the Bulgarian State Security Service is directly supervised by a KGB officer on the spot. You mentioned, and then after going through some additional testimony, you mentioned that you conclude that the Bulgarian secret police is in effect controlled by the KGB.

Mr. SLAVOV. Yes.

Mr. RITTER. All the connections to this case points to Agca being controlled, being run by Bulgarian state security. The previous wit-

ness testified that Bulgarian state security would never make an independent political international decision, it would come from the Politburo, and that given the intimacy of the links between the Soviet Government and the Bulgarian Government, and the Soviet KGB with an officer on the spot, in your words, in every department in Bulgarian Secret Service, what is your conclusion about the assassination attempt on the life of the Pope?

Mr. SLAVOV. Now, if the Bulgarian Security Service was involved in that, they had to, of course, be directed in that doing by the KGB. But I believe that in other cases the Bulgarian security might have—not acted on their own, but they might have developed a plan of an execution like the Markov case, but, of course, they had to check with the KGB about that—not the KGB, but on a higher level, the Politburo, not the KGB. Directly the Politburo.

Mr. RITTER. We, unfortunately, have to go to the floor to vote. I would like to thank you very much for coming to testify today, and thank all those of you who came to participate in these hearings.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Mr. Slavov. I'm sorry that we have a vote and we cannot stay longer. This hearing is closed.

[Written statements submitted for the record by Chairman Dante B. Fascell, Cochairman Robert Dole and Commissioner Orrin G. Hatch follow:]

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY CSCE CHAIRMAN DANTE B. FASCELL WITH REFERENCE TO THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON THE POPE

Today, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe will hold a hearing to review the sequence of events established and documented by Ms. Claire Sterling on alleged Bulgarian and Soviet complicity in the assassination attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II.

As Chairman of the Commission, I authorized this review in accordance with our mandate to monitor and encourage compliance with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. The evidence collected by Ms. Sterling lends strong support to the theory that the Bulgarian secret police supported or actually controlled Mehmet Ali Agca in his attempt on the life of the Pope, himself the head of a CSCE signatory state. This supposition, if true is both a most grievous violation of the Helsinki Final Act and a ringing commentary on the hypocrisy of the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, both of which supported stronger language against terrorism in the current CSCE negotiations at the recessed Madrid conference.

Commitments accepted under Principle VI of the Final Act call on the participating States to "refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorist activities, or to subversive or other activities directed toward the violent overthrow of the regime of another participating State."

The issue of terrorism has assumed increased dimensions in the security of Europe and the free world in general. Our witnesses today have devoted considerable time and effort to document a series of conspiratorial events that could shed some light on this complex world of intrigue and deception.

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY CSCE COCHAIRMAN BOB DOLE WITH REFERENCE TO THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON THE POPE

The subject of our hearing is the possible complicity of the Bulgarian or Soviet secret police in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981 by Mehmet Ali Agca. The possibility that the Soviet Union, a superpower and signatory of the Helsinki Accords on Security and Cooperation in Europe along with the United States, the Holy See itself, as well as 32 other European nations, would be involved in, or have knowledge of, a plot to murder the Pope, is a serious charge. It would have profound East-West repercussions if found to be true, as well as being an abominable violation of the Helsinki Accords with which this Commission is concerned.

That Agca might have been involved in a wider plot, possibly involving the KGB-dominated Bulgarian secret police, was first raised publicly in this country early this year by ABC News, and brought to the attention of the Helsinki Commission by Commissioner Ritter. New evidence has since been uncovered by Claire Sterling, author of this month's Reader's Digest article on this subject and publicized by the NBC News special Tuesday night.

Our hearing is part of an essential effort to carefully and impartially examine all the evidence—including circumstantial evidence based on our understanding of Communist bloc intelligence operations—of possible Soviet and Bulgarian involvement with Agca. It is our hope that the three witnesses before us today may be able to shed some light on this issue and provide insights into several important problem areas.

We need to examine very closely the possibility of Soviet complicity in terrorist operations which would be in blatant violation of the Helsinki pledges. The Soviets have applied terror tactics on a massive scale inside the Soviet Union to consolidate their rule. The possibility of directing resources to terrorists as part of an effort to destabilize Western governments cannot be ignored. Our purpose is to examine the facts as they have been uncovered and to assess their relevance to Soviet and Bulgarian commitments to the Helsinki Final Act.

Written Statement by CSCE Commissioner Orrin G. Hatch With Reference to the Assassination Attempt on the Pope

We are here today to investigate recent news reports linking Soviet Bloc intelligence agents to the attempt by Turkish terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca to assassinate Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981. Our principal witness this morning, Ms. Claire Sterling, a highly respected European journalist and expert on international terrorism, spent four months researching this complex case in Turkey, West Germany, Italy, Tunisia and other countries. Ms. Sterling's findings are summarized in this month's issue of Reader's Digest, and I understand she has additional information to report at this hearing.

As Ms. Sterling stated in the Reader's Digest article, "there is hard evidence that Agca was an instrument in an elaborate international plot." From this account and recent newspaper articles it seems to me the most compelling evidence includes the following:

(1) According to a photograph and eye-witnesses, Agca had at least two accomplices in Saint Peter's Square, both of whom had counterfeit passports; (Reader's Digest, page 73, September 1982).

(2) During his trial Agca "boasted of getting help from various terrorists abroad—'Bulgarians, English and Iranians.' " (Reader's Digest, page 75).

(3) In 1977, Agca admitted taking part in a secret guerilla-training camp in Lebanon. (Reader's Digest, page 76.)

(4) Also in 1977 several bank accounts were opened in Agca's name by someone forging his signature. According to Ms. Sterling's article, "Amounting to 260,000 Turkish lire (about $12,000 at the time) paid in over 12 months, the funds deposited in any one city were invariably withdrawn in another by the real Agca." (Reader's Digest, page 78.)

(5) Agca obtained the gun used in the attack from associates of Abuzer Ugurlu, who is reportedly connected with Bulgaria's secret service. (Reader's Digest, page 82.)

(6) The Washington Post (Sept. 15, 1982) states that "NBC . . . quotes unidentified papal aides as saying that John Paul believes the Russians were behind Agca's attempt to kill him . . ." Some sources believe Moscow's motive was to kill the "spiritual father" of Poland and a strong Solidarity supporter in order to weaken the independent labor movement in Poland.

These are only a few of the points that Ms. Sterling and newspaper accounts have raised concerning a possible connection between the man who shot the Pope and the Bulgarian secret police as well as the Soviet KGB. I have reached no conclusions myself, but I do believe there is sufficient evidence to warrant an investigation into this matter.

○